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JOSEPH LANCASTER, JAMES THOMSON, AND THE LANCASTERIAN SYSTEM OF MUTUAL INSTRU- TION, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HISPANIC AMERICA

I. PUBLIC INSTRUCTION IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The eighteenth century may be described as a period of mental squalor on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the United States of America the foundations were being laid of some of our oldest universities—as Yale, in 1701, and Princeton in 1746—but the country was yet new and but slight efforts had been made toward the generalization of public instruction outside of the largest centers of population. The means of communication among the different colonies, or states, as they became after the American Revolution, were few and inferior. No community of interests in the public intellectual weal had as yet been aroused. The Revolution and the consequent upheaval of society, incident to the formation of a new government, absorbed the energies of the people during the last quarter of a century and the needs of instruction were, for the time, eclipsed. Even the schools and colleges which had been established were generally broken up and many were unable to reassemble their students when peace had been declared and the new constitution adopted.

In England the century was one of intellectual stagnation. The ancient universities still ministered to the needs of a certain class of society, and the philosophers of the time discussed very learnedly the problems related to education as viewed from their peculiar standpoint. Yet these discussions had to do with theory rather than practice, and no one was found who was capable of applying the philosophical doctrines to a practical solution of the distressing problems of the time. As in France, so in England there was a rising tendency and an increasing desire to replace

the monastic and ultramontane education, and to initiate the children of the schools into the study of common and ordinary affairs, of all those subjects which form the conduct of life and the basis of civil society.

The results of this sterile and insipid teaching of the period have been well summed up by a writer of the time. He says:

Most young men know neither the world which they inhabit, the earth which nourishes them, the men who supply their needs, the animals which serve them, nor the workmen and the citizens whom they employ. They do not have even a desire for this kind of knowledge. No advantage is taken of their natural curiosity for the purpose of increasing it. They know not how to admire neither the wonders of nature nor the prodigies of the arts.

Yet, in spite of these conditions, which were recognized and deplored by many thinkers of the day, practical efforts to better the grade of instruction given were but few and sporadic and the children of the proletariat, in particular, received but the scantiest of attention. Instruction, even when given them, was limited to the rudiments of but two or three branches of study and was given under conditions that could not have inspired the pupil to intellectual effort on his own behalf.

A number of "Charity Schools" provided gratuitous instruction for the children of the very poor, but the greater number of schools which pretended to minister to the needs of the children of the working classes were the results of private enterprise. These were of the most meager equipment and would not be tolerated today in any civilized nation, because of their unsanitary, not to say unpedagogical, standards. Those who set up such schools were generally the physically incapacitated of the community who could not, otherwise, gain a livelihood. The lack of pedagogical preparation, or even of intellectual ability, was not, in the mind of the community, a bar to the establishing of a school; and this fact, more than any other, determines the extreme intellectual poverty of the period.

Crabbe, writing in 1780, as quoted by Fitch in his "*Educational Aims and Methods*," has given us the following vivid description of one of the so-called "Dame Schools" of the time. He says:

Where a deaf, poor, patient widow sits
And awes some thirty infants as she knits.
Her room is small, they can not widely stray;
Her threshold high, they can not run away.
Though deaf, she sees the rebel hearers shout;
Though lame, her white rod nimbly walks about.
With band of yarn she keeps offenders in,
And to her gown the sturdiest rogues can pin.
Aided by these, and spells and tell-tale birds,
Her power they dread and reverence her words.

The same writer gives a description of a Boys' School, of the same period, which is illuminating as to methods and general atmosphere. Evidently the picture is taken from life, and is as follows:

Poor Reuben Dixon has the noisiest school
Of ragged lads that ever bowed to rule,
Low in his price,—the men who heave our coals
And clean our causeways send him boys in shoals.
To see poor Reuben, with his fry, beside
Their half-checked rudeness and his half-scorned pride;
Their room,—the sty in which the assembly meet
In the close lane behind the Northgate street;
To observe his vain efforts to keep the peace,
Till tolls the bell and strife and trouble cease,
Calls for our praise. His lot our praise deserves,
But not our pity. Reuben has no nerves.
Mid noise and dirt and stench and play and prate,
He calmly cuts the pen or views the slate.

In Hispanic America, or all that part of the western continent not included within the present bounds of the United States and Canada, education was in an even more discouraging condition. The universities founded by the representatives of the Spanish crown were in the hands of the clergy and the education given within their halls was monastic and medieval, given according to methods prescribed by the Church in the Old World. It was dogmatic, and its object was to make men submissive to monarchic rule in Church and State. There was no

liberty of thought, no free study of history, no practical curricula. To quote another writer:

The instruction was of a pronounced theological character. The object of the universities was to graduate a creole clergy who should keep the principle of the divine right of kings alive and strong in the colonies.

It was not until the opening years of the nineteenth century that the old regime received a rude awakening and by virtue of the revolution against Spain, the creole or common people came to have some voice in the government and the right to demand more and better education for their children. San Martín, Bolívar, O'Higgins, Artigas, and a host of less known leaders were the heralds of the new democracy and it was largely through their help and sympathy that the distressing conditions of the preceding century gave place to an era of progress and it became possible to undertake the education and social uplift of the youth of the hitherto submerged classes.

The principal liberators of Spanish America, as will be seen hereafter, were liberal in sentiment and recognized the urgent need of bettering the condition of the masses through the introduction of free schools and obligatory attendance on their sessions. But the times were troublous and, even after a republican form of government had been established, public instruction remained in a position of secondary importance. Even in this twentieth century, old educational conditions have not been entirely effaced and a free and compulsory system of instruction for the masses has not been universally enforced. The seventy-five per cent of illiterates in Hispanic America considered as a whole speaks eloquently and pitifully of the failure of the mother countries in the matter of education and of the weakness of the republican governments which have in general failed to rise to the height of their opportunities and introduce modern conditions which shall provide the children with at least the rudiments of education.

II. JOSEPH LANCASTER, THE MAN AND HIS WORK

It was in the midst of the distressing period of intellectual poverty noted above that the world had its first glimpse of Joseph Lancaster who was to become the founder of one of the best-known systems of monitorial or mutual instruction of which there is any record in history.

Joseph Lancaster was born in London, in 1778, of the proverbially "poor but pious parents", and his heart was early filled with a desire for service. He was interested, especially, in the education and moral uplift of the poor children who surrounded him, and, while yet a boy, began to gather them together for free instruction. He himself says:

It was my early wish to spend my life to the glory of Him who gave it, and in promoting the happiness of my fellowmen. With this view, I looked forward, at the age of sixteen, to entering the dissenting ministry. But it pleased God to favour me with such a different view of things that I became a frequenter of the religious meetings of the Society of Christians called Quakers, and, ultimately, a member of that Society.

In this connection, he fails to record for our information that, for reasons that must have been satisfactory to them, the members of this same sect afterward expelled him from their membership. Other writers have informed us that such action was taken in view of certain weaknesses of character which were to appear in his later life. Yet, in spite of these defects of character and the fact of his excommunication, he honored the sect as few of its members have done.

At the very close of the century, when just twenty years of age, he made his first attempt at public instruction. A large room was secured for the purpose and he then made the following unusual announcement:

All that will may send their children and have them educated freely; and those who do not wish to have education for nothing may pay for it if they please.

As a result of this extraordinary method of advertising, within a year he found himself surrounded by a thousand children.

"They come to me for education", he said, "like flocks of sheep". Success in his undertaking came faster than he was prepared to meet it, and the burden became almost too heavy for his untried shoulders.

Very soon, however, through the attraction of numbers, some of the most prominent men of the day became interested in his work and they, in turn, enlisted the interest and sympathy of the king, then George III. His interview with the monarch merits full reproduction, since it marks the turning point in Lancaster's career and gave to the Lancasterian system that distinct imprint which makes it worthy of the special consideration of Christian educators of today. This was as follows:

The king:

Lancaster, I have sent for you to give me an account of your system of education, which, I hear, is meeting with opposition. One master teach five hundred pupils at one time? How do you keep them in order?

Lancaster:

Please your majesty, by the same principle thy Majesty's army is kept in order; by the word of command.

The king:

Good, good. It does not require an aged general to give a command. One of younger years can do it.

Lancaster then proceeded to explain his use of monitors and again the king assented and said, "Good". At the conclusion of the interview the king said:

Lancaster, I highly approve of your system and it is my wish that every poor child in my dominions should be taught to read the Bible. I will do anything you wish to promote this object.

Lancaster:

Please thy Majesty, if the system meets thy approbation, I can go through the country and lecture on the system, and I have no doubt but in a few months I shall be able to give thy Majesty an account where ten thousand poor children are being educated and some of my youths instructing them.

The king:

Lancaster, I will subscribe one hundred pounds sterling annually and,—addressing the Queen,—you shall subscribe fifty pounds, Charlotte, and the princesses twenty-five pounds each. You can have the money immediately.

In accordance with this plan, Lancaster at once set about the giving of lectures and the collection of money, and his report for 1810 states that he lectured sixty-seven times during the year to almost twenty-five thousand hearers, that the subscriptions amounted to a total of over three thousand pounds sterling, and that fifty new schools were opened with over fourteen thousand children. This unusual success may be said to have been the cause of the downfall of Lancaster. His head, which had never been strong, was completely turned by the attention shown him by members of the royal house and the influential men of the day, and the possession of so much money by one who had never handled other than small sums soon proved his ruin. He fell into debt, and was even thrown into prison on this charge. He became extravagant, impatient of control, and soon proved himself incapable of working with other people. He was finally compelled to close his schools in London, but the "British and Foreign School Society", which had been organized for the purpose, took charge of them, Lancaster himself went to Ireland where he again met with almost phenomenal success for a time. Here again he soon fell into the same difficulties which he had experienced in London and was finally declared bankrupt and his schools closed.

While his system had been at the height of its popularity and usefulness in London, representatives from both North and South America studied his schools and, as a result, similar institutions were established in the principal centers of the United States and South America.

After his failure in Ireland Lancaster decided to emigrate to the New World and, accordingly, went first to Caracas, Venezuela,¹ where he remained for a short time engaged in the development of the schools which had already been established on his

¹ Then a part of Colombia, but formed into a separate republic in 1845, when its independence was recognized by Spain.

system. Thence he went to the West Indies and finally reached New York, where he made his headquarters.

The "Society for the Establishment of a Free School", of New York City, after studying the methods in use in other countries, decided to adopt that of Lancaster, and the "Charity Schools" of Philadelphia did the same. The monitorial system then spread through practically all the eastern states, as far south as Georgia, and as far west as Ohio. Lancaster in person assisted in the work of the schools of New York City, Brooklyn, and Philadelphia, and his system was generally adopted in the high schools and academies of the region. The state systems of Maryland and Indiana, which were converted into high schools after the civil war, were originally organized on this basis, and training schools for teachers on the Lancasterian basis also became common.

But this system was, in a sense, a mere makeshift and as soon as the country became sufficiently prosperous to make more generous provision for its educational needs, it fell into disuse and by the middle of the century had been practically abandoned. Its scholastic methods gradually gave way to the more modern and more philosophical conceptions of Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Herbart, but not until it had done a great good to the country in the training of the children of the poor.²

Lancaster also went as far north as Montreal, Canada, and succeeded in establishing a number of schools in the Dominion. But his eccentricities of character soon caused him to lose the confidence and support of all with whom he was associated and he was continually obliged to move on to new surroundings. He finally sank into extreme poverty and became a pensioner on the charity of a number of his old friends who remained faithful in spite of his vagaries and failures. He died in New York in 1838 from a street accident.

Of him, no less an authority than the conservative "Edinburgh Review" said:

Lancaster devised a system and brought it very near perfection, by which education could be placed within the reach of the poorest. Alge-

² See Graves's *History of Education*, p. 242.

bra and Geometry, even the sublime theorems of Newton and Laplace, may be taught by this method. . . . We do not hesitate to say that it is applicable, or may soon be applied, to the whole circle of human knowledge.

And DeWitt Clinton, President of the "Free School Society of New York City", at the opening of a new free school, in 1806, had said:

I recognize in Lancaster the benefactor of the human race. I consider his system as creating a new era in education.

In spite of a seeming failure, Joseph Lancaster made a deep impression on his own times and set in motion currents of thought and educational reform which reached many distant lands. If his character was defective, it must also be remembered that he had rare gifts which have seldom been equalled among those who have unreservedly dedicated their talents to the education of the young.

III. THE LANCASTERIAN METHOD

A somewhat more detailed description of the methods employed by Joseph Lancaster seems necessary to a full understanding of its remarkable influence on the educational movements of the century in which he lived and its claim to be perpetuated in history. As already seen, his ambition was to educate the children of the very poor. Those whose parents or guardians could not pay were received on equal terms with those who were able to make a small monthly contribution toward the expenses of the school.

The equipment of a Lancasterian school was the most meager. A large rented room sufficed for the number of children who could crowd into it, and the material helps to teaching were the scantiest. Tables in the center of the room and covered with sand served for the classes in writing and arithmetic, while loose leaves torn from a book and passed from hand to hand served for the reading lesson. In view of the king's expressed desire that the children should be taught to read the Bible, selections from this Book were generally used for the lessons in reading,

and Lancaster did not fail to make a practical application, too, of the moral lessons thus presented to the pupils. At the head of each table sat a monitor, with the materials for teaching before him, while the head monitors, three or four in number, hovered about the chair of the master, at one end of the room, anxious and ready to carry out his commands.

The children began their work at ten o'clock in the morning, but at half past eight the master met the monitors and gave them the instruction which they, in turn, were to pass on to the pupils. The master from his elevated seat directed the movements of the children by means of a whistle. At a given signal the different groups, each with a monitor at its head, would march from one position to another, as necessity arose for a change of occupation. Inasmuch as this marching and counter-marching was carried on in such small space, the Lancasterian school has often been compared to a man-of-war. The discipline was strictly military and the monitors awaited and executed the orders of the master with as great eagerness and desire for approbation as could be expected of a subaltern officer.

There were different grades of monitors, and to each was given the teaching of that particular branch of study in which he excelled. They also accompanied the children from their homes to the school and again restored them to their parents, thus avoiding loitering in the streets, while they served, at the same time, as a link between the school and the home. Very small children were carefully looked after and it was the continuous duty of the monitors to counsel their pupils on points of morals and conduct.

Corporal punishment was strictly forbidden—a distinct departure from the customs of the times. But the expedients devised for the purpose of punishment, in order to avoid the necessity of striking the child, were too often puerile and, possibly, more mischievous, in the end, than the then prevalent practice of flogging. Refractory pupils were often thrust into a cage and slung up into the roof of the schoolroom by means of a system of pulleys. Others were obliged to kneel or assume other postures which excited the ridicule of their companions. The appeal

was made to the sense of shame, only, and such punishments must have hardened some of the coarser children and wounded to the quick many others whose sensibilities were more refined and sensitive.

The instruction given was, necessarily, superficial and was limited to the merest rudiments of the primary branches. Yet, by dint of constant and prolonged repetition, even the dullest made some progress and the great majority learned to read and write and to solve the simpler problems of arithmetic, and to do these few things well.

A yet greater benefit to the unfortunate children of the slums was their rescue from the lives of squalor and evil surroundings for a few hours each day, and their being brought under a kindly discipline and thrown into cheerful association with hundreds of other pupils of their own age. They thus forgot their hunger and lack of proper clothing and secured freedom from parental authority and influence which, it is very probable, were not always helpful.

General conclusions

The Lancastrian system, like all others of its kind, was defective in many respects, even as it excelled in others. In spite of its deficiencies, it awakened a widespread interest in the education of the children of the very poor and the effect of the movement which had its beginning in the influence of this system may be noted in most European countries of today. Had it taken deeper root in the soil of Hispanic America, it is probable that the nations of this part of the western continent would not now have to report that so large a proportion of their population can neither read nor write.

Among the defects of the system, the following may be noted:

1. The monitors, who gave most of the instruction, were young and had received but the scantiest preparation for their work. They came from the same social strata that provided the children for the schools—generally the poorest of the working classes—had the same social deficiencies that were to be noted in the character of their small charges, and possessed no education

or culture other than that which they had received in the same school of which they were to become monitors. Moreover, although they might be chosen with the greatest care and given all preparation possible under the practice of the system, it could not be expected that they would have that natural gift for teaching which so distinguished the founder of the system, even from his earliest youth. In Hispanic America, in particular, there was at that time a dearth of suitable material from which to develop efficient monitors, due to the lack of previous instruction in the new communities and the appalling prevalence of analphabetism. To this cause, more than to any other, may be attributed the evanescent influence of the Lancasterian schools of Hispanic America.

2. Although special classes were formed for the instruction of the monitors, the hours were insufficient and the teaching inadequate. Joseph Lancaster, through the genius of his personality, as well as the contagion of his enthusiasm and his unique methods of imparting knowledge, could do much toward the effective preparation of those who were to act as his assistants. But those who endeavored to walk in his footsteps had not the same gifts and could not produce the same results. The monitors learned the mechanism of their office but often without understanding what was to be imparted to others.

3. The giving to young boys an authority beyond their years and attainments must have produced the inevitable result in the development of their own character. They would become domineering and despotic, and would cultivate a certain pride and aloofness which would militate against their success as teachers of children.

4. The attendance of these schools was always large. Hundreds of children were sometimes gathered in a single room. With but one master in charge of this number of pupils, he could not exert that authority nor exercise that discipline which would be necessary, especially among the small children of the poor in whose homes, very often, all discipline had been lacking. Consequently, even with the assistance of monitors, there would be lacking that personal touch between master and pupil which is so essential in all true education.

5. The system was largely military and much time was lost from instruction in the giving and carrying out of commands. No change of occupation or position could be made by a class without the necessary military order, and the marching and evolutions consumed a great deal of time that should have been given to the work of instruction or to study. Furthermore, these exercises were obligatory for all and could not fail to work harm among those who were physically undeveloped or who suffered from weakness or illness due to insufficient nourishment. The smaller and weaker among the pupils would find the military drill a detriment rather than a help, especially when compelled to undergo it in company with older and stronger pupils.

6. The practice of giving badges, offices, and rewards, which was largely developed in the Lancastrian system, tended to develop a utilitarian spirit among the pupils. This would be unfortunate in any school. Moreover, the prizes were given indiscriminately and for acts of insignificant importance. Right was practiced, not because it was right but in order to receive a reward. Such conduct could be but superficial and such teaching could not reach the springs of real character.

7. The crowning pedagogical defect of the system was its inelasticity, its mechanical, repetitious methods, and its lack of a proper psychological basis. It was economical and served admirably the educational needs of a country in the first stages of its intellectual and commercial development. But as soon as it was possible to make greater appropriations for the work of schools, the defects and shortcomings of the Lancastrian system became glaringly apparent and its use was soon discontinued.

The advantages of the system may be summed up, as follows:

1. Owing to the interest awakened by it in the education of poor children, and its phenomenal success in England, primary instruction received a decided impulse in Great Britain and Europe, and elementary schools were established in great numbers. This stimulus persists even now in some countries, and makes possible the unusually favorable showing in the statistics of primary instruction, especially if compared with the countries of Hispanic America where the system did not take deep root.

2. The fact that one master could control such a considerable number of pupils, through his monitors, made it possible to multiply the number of schools. From the standpoint of economy, the system of mutual instruction is vastly superior to that in which individual instruction is given by the master.

3. The system demonstrated the truth of two fundamental principles in pedagogy—*a*) That children should be grouped in their classes according to their knowledge, and not according to age, size, or the time already spent in the school. *b*) That simultaneous or group teaching is that which is best adapted to elementary schools, since it gives the stimulus of example and competition and creates a certain degree of animation in the class.

4. One of the greatest recommendations of the system was its absolute freedom from sectarian bias or narrowness. It merely insisted on the use of the Bible as a text-book in the classes of reading, but did not permit religious discussions or comparisons. In this respect it was superior to similar systems of the time—as that of Bell, which was distinctly Anglican—and gained in the estimation of the public and in the efficiency of the work done.

5. Corporal punishment was forbidden. This placed the schools of this system in vivid contrast with other schools of the day, including many of our own century. Force of character, rather than force of arm, was the source of control on the part of the monitor or of the master in the schools of Joseph Lancaster; and, although other punishments, as we have seen, were scarcely less reprehensible, some advance was made in the fact that no one was allowed to strike a pupil.

IV. JAMES THOMSON AND HIS TWO SOCIETIES

“The British and Foreign School Society” took upon itself not only the responsibility in England of the work of the school methods initiated by Lancaster, but, cognizant of the great need for such instruction in other countries, especially in Hispanic America, decided to send its representatives to the western

continent for the purpose of establishing schools. In view of the special trend given the instruction in all schools under this system, because of the expressed desire of the king that every pupil should be taught to read the Bible, it is not strange that the above named society should unite its efforts with those of the "British and Foreign Bible Society", and that these two societies should delegate their representation to one and the same man.

James Thomson, a Scotchman, was the man chosen to represent them in Hispanic America, and the success of the Lancasterian system in gaining a foothold among the Spanish speaking nations of the New World was due to him, rather than to the one whose name it bears. Of the man, before he undertook his work in Hispanic America, but little is known. His nationality would suggest that he was a Presbyterian, but of this there seems to be no record. It is also supposed that in addition to the degree of Doctor in Divinity, given him in recognition of his work, he had previously received that of Doctor in Medicine. His own reticence concerning himself, and his complete disregard of personal danger or personal ambition, have thrown a veil over his life before he began the work which has made him worthy a place in history, and there are few sources from which to draw information, other than his own Letters.

The present president of the University of Chile, in a volume which is largely a translation of Thomson's Letters, entitled *The Lancasterian System in Chile and other Countries of South America*,³ condemns him in unmeasured terms as a hypocrite, since he believes that he endeavored to introduce the Lancasterian system only as a blind to his real work which was the introduction of the Bible into countries that were then, as now, Roman Catholic. In this book it is stated:

To the sound of official trumpets, Thomson founded school and societies in Santiago. How certain of our leading men would have been horrified had they been told that the garments of the schoolmaster concealed a Protestant missionary! And Thomson did not limit his activities to making the Bible known under the form of certain pas-

³ Domingo Amunátegui Solar, *El Sistema de Lancaster en Chile y en otros países sud-americanos*.

sages in the books which were composed by him for use in the schools. He was, in addition, one of the first among us who insisted on popularizing the reading of the Bible as a whole. And those fervent Catholics, those venerable patriots, gave the use of their names to lend prestige to the work of a heretic!

Summing up the charge against Thomson, as regards his practice of hypocrisy, this author comes to the following conclusions:

The double-faced methods employed by Thomson to diffuse the knowledge of the Bible are, without a doubt, inexcusable; but, in reverence to his memory it must be said that this is the usual method of procedure employed by all missionaries, in general The opinions of Thomson about the war and the movement toward independence, in general, as well as in regard to certain phases of this movement, reveal a man who is sensible and perspicacious In a word, when he is not talking about the Bible and the ways of making it known, his observations are always happy. He is something like Don Quijote, whom questions of chivalry made mad, but who thought very reasonably along other lines.

Thomson relates his experiences as Agent of the two Societies in South America in a naïve volume of letters written from different points which he touched on his travels and published under the title *Letters on the Moral and Religious State of South America, written during a residence of nearly seven years in Buenos Aires, Chile, Peru, and Colombia*.⁴ In the preface to this little volume, which is now out of print and of which but a very few copies are known to exist, he says:

I am now about to return to that quarter of the world, and trust that the same gracious hand which protected me and guided me in my former wanderings there, will still conduct me and will enable me to sow seed which may spring up to eternal life. Ten days after this date I embark for Mexico, as the Agent of the "*British and Foreign Bible Society*." I go fraught with a sacred treasure, with some thousands of copies of the Holy Scriptures. Besides circulating these, which are nearly all in the Spanish language, I am commissioned to procure translations of the Scriptures into the native languages of that country, and which are still spoken by some millions of its inhabitants.

⁴ Published by James Nisbet, 21 Berners Street, London, 1827.

The success which he had in introducing the Lancasterian schools and the Bible into South America may best be told by following him, by means of his own letters, as well as by references taken from state and other documents, as he journeyed through the continent. Beginning the intellectual and spiritual conquest of South America in the city of Buenos Aires, as José de San Martín, some six years before, had begun the struggle for political liberty, he worked his way westward and then northward, met with an enthusiastic reception from the governments of all the countries visited, and, finally, having traversed the continent from east to west and from south to north, at a time when travel was both difficult and dangerous, he returned to his own land under the mistaken conviction that he had sown seed which would blossom into a bounteous harvest.

His letters give us not only a clear insight into the religious conditions of the time, but, in addition, throw much light on the social and political movements of the period and on the character of the most famous leaders in the liberation of the continent from the power of the Spanish monarch.

In this study we are to notice, especially, his work as the representative of "The British and Foreign School Society", although it is true that he combined this work with that of the Bible Society to such a degree that it is difficult to separate them. The distinguished president of the University of Chile, to whose book reference has already been made, says:

It may seem strange that the two societies should commission one man for work in seemingly diverse occupations. But, if we take into account the fact that the Lancasterian schools used the Bible as a text in the classes for reading, it will the more readily be understood how one person could attend to the interests of both societies. In the light of modern principles, this was the grave defect of the Lancasterian system. The books which compose the Holy Scriptures, are not adapted to the intelligence of a child, either as regards the material which is treated in them nor the age in which they were written. Their adoption, however, is easily explained. It must not be forgotten that the Lancasterian system had its origin in a Protestant country, in which the Bible is the daily bread of the spirit. In England, the prin-

cipal passages are read daily, in the church by the pastor and in the home by the head of the family. Furthermore, at that time school pedagogy was but slightly developed and all systems of teaching had their faults. For example, it was very common to teach the children to read from some book of mysticism But the truth is that the Statutes of God, as Thomson calls them, were completely inadequate as a text for reading.

James Thomson reached Buenos Aires on the sixth of October, 1818, and remained in that city and vicinity until about the end of May, 1821. In a work on the *History of Primary Instruction in the Argentine Republic*, we find the following reference to the interest created by the arrival of this representative of a new system of education. The writer of the history says:

The schools from 1810 continued developing their program of studies, very quietly, with no other variation than the occasional change of a teacher, etc., until, at the end of the first decade of the emancipation, they were convulsed by a revolution: the Lancasterian system had reached our shores!

In the same work there are to be found, also, interesting historical references to the arrival of Thomson and the enthusiasm awakened by his efforts on behalf of the new system of education. It will be noted that a priest was chosen as secretary of the "Lancasterian School Society", thus showing how readily even the local Roman Catholic authorities accepted the new system and lent their aid to its adoption and generalization in the different countries which it touched. The following paragraphs are of special interest:

As soon as the Lancasterian system was established in England, and in view of its immediate success, it found itself obliged to enter into a struggle against the influence of the Anglican clergy which was in charge of the greater part of the schools of the country. The struggle was long and obstinate,—so much so that in 1820, the Quaker Lancaster was obliged to emigrate to South America. He established himself in Colombia⁵ where, in the prosecution of his apostolate, he began to work for the establishment of the schools according to his

⁵ Now Venezuela.

system. . . . Inasmuch as the news of this system extended throughout the civilized world, Buenos Aires had also learned of it but could not put it into practice through the lack of some one who could organize it according to the rules laid down by the founder.

In 1818 the Lancasterian Society designated one of its members, Mr. James Thomson, to visit these countries and set forth the excellencies of the method. Thomson reached Buenos Aires in the same year and met with a chilling reception. But he set to work with his usual enthusiasm and efficiency. On his initiative, a Society was formed for the support of the schools which might be founded and father Bartholomew Muñoz was chosen as its Secretary.

The first meetings were held in the convent of St. Francis. A school for girls was soon founded and came to have an attendance of two hundred and fifty pupils. . . .

Mr. Thomson carried on two classes of propaganda with equal enthusiasm,—the Lancasterian School System and the diffusion of the Bible. His first sale of Bibles reached a total of four hundred copies in 1820. Then he continued his journeys to Montevideo, Patagonia, San Juan, Chile, Peru, Colombia, etc., in the interests of the sale and explanation of the Bible.

However, he did more for schools than for the diffusion of the Bible, in view of the strength of the Roman Catholic Church and the social condition of the countries visited.

In his journeys through South America, which lasted about seven years, Thomson showed himself capable of overcoming obstacles which were almost insurmountable and gave proofs of an energy that is not often seen and that is capable of confronting all trials.

During the period of his stay in Buenos Aires he was so fortunate as to enlist the sympathy and active help of Don Bernardino Rivadavia, who was then an official of the government and, as always, deeply interested in all matters of education. As showing the active participation of this statesman in establishing the Lancasterian system in Argentina, the following decree is copied from the *National Register* of 1823 (folio 1658):

“Buenos Aires, February 24, 1823.

The government has decided and hereby decrees the following:

Article 1. The hospices of the Mercedarian friars, known as San Ramón de las Conchas, and the convent of San Pedro are hereby expropriated for the uses of education.

Article 2. In these centers there shall be educated the children of the towns and territories of the adjacent country districts.

Article 3. The Lancasterian Society, recently established in this country, shall be invited to take charge of the schools of the city and in the country.

Article 4. Said society shall draw up rules for teaching, which shall be submitted to the government for its approbation.

Article 5. Let this decree be transmitted to the proper authorities for putting it into effect and let it be published in the *Official Register*.
(Signed) B. RIVADAVIA.

It is interesting to note also that Thomson was warmly supported by Camilo Henriquez, a friar who had been expelled from Chile for political reasons, but who afterward returned to his own country and became one of the most zealous defenders of the Lancasterian system of education in that country. Few names are more widely or more favorably known in the southern half of the continent, in matters of education, than those of Rivadavia and Henriquez, and it is to the credit of Thomson that he was able to enlist the sympathies of such distinguished citizens in his campaign. It was, no doubt, due to the friendly interest of men like Rivadavia that the first society for the extension of the work of the Lancasterian School Society was founded in Buenos Aires. The organization of this society is thus described in the *Ministerial Gazette*, under date of February, 1821, almost three years after the arrival of Thomson in Buenos Aires:

On Monday, the 5th of the present month, there was a general meeting of the Lancasterian Society for the purpose of revising the projected constitution. This was studied and approved and it was voted to send it, with the necessary explanations, to the Honorable Provincial Congress, soliciting its approbation by the body.

There then followed the election of the president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, and counsellors of the society for the present year. The approbation of congress is awaited in order to begin work which is dedicated to the advance of public education—a most worthy task. This is a work that has been neglected because of the thunder of wars and the repeated convulsions of society; but it is so noble, so necessary, that, should it be abandoned, it would be the same as to give up all hope of present and future happiness for the country.

During his residence in Buenos Aires, Thomson was able to found eight schools in that city, and within a few years the local Lancastrian Society reported that there were one hundred with a total matriculation of over five thousand children.

The movement spread to the provinces and a large number of schools were organized. One of these, which merits special attention, was established in Rio Negro, distant more than five hundred miles from Buenos Aires, in what was then a wild territory almost uninhabited by white men. An army officer who had been appointed governor of the district, had attended the Lancastrian school in Buenos Aires and knew something of the system, and, on his departure for his new post carried with him the materials necessary for opening a school. Thomson, in a comment on the conduct of this officer, says:

If all Governors, far and near, were to act in the same manner, we should soon see ignorance turned into knowledge, the world over.

One of the most interesting details of the establishing of the System in Buenos Aires is the step taken by the cabildo in order to secure a school for girls. To this end the following circular was issued:

The Honorable Cabildo Opens a Subscription for the Education of Girls according to the System of Lancaster.

The honorable cabildo, which has put forth every effort, for many years and by every means within its reach, to offer a thorough education to the children of the poor of the vicinity, has spent, in effect, great sums of money in sustaining many schools in different parts of the city, and even in the country districts.

Wishing to put these schools on the best footing possible, in order that instruction and education may be more rapid and efficacious, and, at the same time, more simple, it has been agreed to put all schools under the same plan of mutual instruction as given us by Mr. Lancaster, which, with general approbation, has been adopted in European countries.

To this end, the schools have now been placed under the direction of Mr. James Thomson, who understands the system thoroughly and who has been named general director of them all, both in the city and in the country districts.

The schools which the cabildo has maintained up to the present time are all for boys, and now it desires to establish one for girls under this same system of education.

It had been planned to set aside a sufficient sum of money for this worthy purpose, but the present state of the funds of the cabildo, which are practically exhausted, make it impossible to put into effect such a useful and beneficial resolution.

However, since the cabildo does not wish that the advantages to be gained from such an establishment be entirely lost, it most earnestly begs its fellow-citizens and, in particular, the worthy ladies of the community, that they be kind enough to contribute to the foundation of this useful institution by means of a voluntary subscription, for the collection of which Mr. Thomson himself will act among the foreign population, aided by the probate judge . . . and by the judge-protector of the poor.

The school or schools which will be established will be under the direction of Mr. Thomson, but, like the other schools for boys, also under the direct supervision of the cabildo.

The above appeal to the community for funds was signed in the office of the cabildo of Buenos Aires and there follows a list of twelve persons who had at once subscribed the sum of about one hundred and fifty pesos for the purpose set forth in the paper.

The provinces of Mendoza and San Juan, on the eastern slope of the Andes, were visited by Thomson, at the urgent request of their authorities. This journey was made from Chile, after he had gone to that country, and necessitated crossing the mountains which, even at the most favorable season of the year was no inconsiderable undertaking. Now the journey is made in a few hours, and in a comfortable train; but Thomson would have had to avail himself of the stage coach or mules, or, what is even more probable, walk a great part of the distance. It is characteristic of him that he makes no mention of the details of this journey. His interest in the work is so great that he enters into no description of the scenery nor of the dangers and difficulties that beset the way.

His first work in these provinces was the establishing of a girls' school, and this was followed by several schools for boys. A

branch of the school society was organized and a printing press loaned by the governor of the province of Mendoza for the purpose of publishing a small periodical in the interests of education. In San Juan, Thomson was fortunate in securing the friendship and help of the new governor who, as an evidence of his liberality, had proclaimed freedom of worship throughout his province. A North American, long resident in the city, also favored the establishment of the schools. A meeting was held in which great interest was manifested by the people, and, after providing the new schools with reading matter for the classes, Thomson returned to Chile.

While his headquarters were in Buenos Aires, Thomson visited the neighboring port of Montevideo, then included in Brazil which was under the control of Portugal. The governor of the city was absent at the time of his visit, but the principal clergyman became interested and promised to present the matter of the introduction of the system to the proper authorities. This he did with such good results that Thomson was requested to send a teacher to establish the first school. In a letter addressed to Thomson, this teacher tells of his reception and the introduction of his work, in the following words:

I was cordially received, not only by the Governor but also by the other magistrates. A great room in the Fort was set apart as a school. This room will hold two hundred children. The general gave orders that the carpenters and masons of the Government should arrange this room and I hope to inaugurate the school in about three weeks more. I am doing all possible to organize a School Society which will have our schools of this city and of the Provinces under its direction. I feel sure of being able to do this, for the members of the Government are very well disposed toward the movement.

In a report prepared by the government of the Republic of Uruguay for the International Exposition held in San Francisco in 1915, that portion referring to the development of primary instruction contains the following reference to the school planted by Thomson almost a hundred years before:

During the revolutionary period which began in 1811, the public and private schools suffered from the results of the reigning anarchy, most

of them being closed while the remainder continued their work with the inevitable irregularity.

This state of affairs continued until José Artigas, head of the movement to liberate the colony from Spain, in an effort to repair the damage caused society by the lack of educational establishments, founded the "National School." He also authorized the opening of some schools which had been closed, but the Portuguese invasion of 1816 frustrated the noble designs of the Uruguayan deliverer. The patriots were defeated by the invaders during whose domination the "Lancasterian Society" was founded in Montevideo, with a view to extending primary education by the establishment of schools subjected to the system of mutual instruction which, at that time, was very popular in the most advanced countries of Europe.

This was the first evolution of the Uruguayan school, since the empirical and irrational means of teaching till then employed were substituted by better ones, although the mutual system undoubtedly has its defects. Its upholders may have been mistaken with respect to the success of this method of teaching, but its application was the result of a pedagogical plan, which was not the case when the schools were directed by religious orders and laymen who had not the necessary knowledge to appreciate the transcendental mission that was entrusted to them.

So encouraging were the results obtained by the Lancasterian Society that the patriots of the year 1825 adopted the scholastic reform instituted by the Portuguese and, with the hope of extending it throughout the country, decreed the foundation of a normal school. This school had as its special mission the preparation of teachers according to the Lancasterian doctrine. The foundation of primary schools in several of the interior towns was also ordered and Montevideo was endowed with two, one for boys and one for girls.

Children who had not been vaccinated were refused admittance, a Board of Inspectors was established, the use of certificates of aptitude and conduct was also inaugurated for the pupils who terminated their studies in the schools supported by the state, and, finally, a class for the study of Latin was included.

From the correspondence carried on at that time between the Minister of Chile in Buenos Aires and his government, it appears that the authorities of Uruguay made an attempt to secure the permanent services of Thomson himself to direct the schools

but recently organized. But the Chilean diplomat presented the attractions and needs of the west coast so convincingly that Thomson signed a contract, by the terms of which he was to give his services to Chile for one year in the establishing of schools and the training of monitors. In payment of these service he was to receive the sum of one hundred *pesos* a month, the *peso* at that time having at least the purchasing power of the dollar. He was also to receive two hundred *pesos* for the payment of his passage around the Horn, but, this amount was not to be paid until after his arrival in the country.

In his last letter written from Buenos Aires he gives an interesting description of the attitude of the people toward him and his work. He says:

I leave all my friends here on the best terms, and I leave the place, in many respects, with regret. I shall never forget all the kindness I have met with in this city, from the magistrates and from all classes with whom I have had intercourse. May God reward them.

When I gave in my resignation, I said that it was my intention to return here next Summer, to visit the schools, and to see how they were coming on. In the kindest manner I was requested not to forget my promise of returning. They were sorry, they said, that it was not in their power to reward me in a pecuniary way, from the lowness of their funds. They begged me to accept of their sincerest thanks for establishing the system of education in the country, from which they said they expected the happiest results in making education general among all classes of people; and they added that, as a mark of respect, they had requested the Government to confer on me the honour of citizenship, which was accordingly done.

The *Ministerial Gazette*, under date of May 30, 1821, contains the following note, in which the request was made in due form:

Most excellent Sir:

The interest with which Mr. James Thomson, on his arrival in these regions, set himself to establish in this country the system of Lancaster for the instruction of the youth; his assiduous dedication to this important establishment; the progress which it has made, due to his influence and skilled administration; the unselfishness with which he has given over a great part of his salary in order to provide a teacher and an

assistant; the generous spirit he has shown in helping to extend the System; these are all very helpful services which the cabildo has not been able to forget and they have aroused the gratitude of its members toward this distinguished foreigner and, even in the midst of its scarcity of funds, it has been ordered that Thomson be reimbursed the amounts which he has spent for the provision of a teacher and an assistant in the school.

This is but a slight demonstration, as compared with what has been saved and what the country has gained by the introduction and establishing of this magnificent system of education.

The services which Thomson has rendered this country ought to be considered as extraordinary, and he should be given a commensurate reward.

The cabildo finds no more adequate recompense than that of inscribing Thomson among the number of the citizens of the country and, to that end, approaches your Excellency with the request that he be given the title of citizen, and that he be requested to meet with the cabildo in order that the proper papers may be placed in his hands, manifesting, in this way, our gratitude and making it known that Buenos Aires knows how to appreciate merit and reward services which are rendered the nation. May God keep you many years. Buenos Aires, May 22, 1821.

In reply to this petition, the following action was taken by the government:

Buenos Aires, May 29, 1821.

The government, recognizing the interest and enthusiasm which Mr. James Thomson has shown in establishing the Lancasterian system of instruction in the primary schools of this city and, desiring to give an authentic testimony of the appreciation with which we look on cultured foreigners who are interested in the progress and prosperity of the country, this letter of naturalization is given, as solicited by the illustrious cabildo, to which body this decree will be transmitted together with the letter itself, in order that, in giving them into the hands of the interested party, it may express to him the deep sentiments and the profound consideration which, for the reasons given, he merits from the government.

Chile

The journey to Chile was made in the winter months, and in a sailing-vessel, around Cape Horn. Forty-four days were occupied in this journey which is now made by modern steamship in ten days, through the Straits of Magellan, or by train, across the Andes, in less than forty hours. In regard to his reception by the authorities of the government of Chile, he has the following to say in a letter written soon after his arrival in Santiago:

You know already that I was engaged to come here by this Government, and that my passage around the Cape was paid by the same. I therefore looked for a fair and open reception. I have not been disappointed;—or, rather, I should say that I have, for I have met with a reception beyond my expectation, I might say to my wish. I have been introduced to the Director and the Ministers of Government, all of whom express much desire for the speedy establishment of schools *throughout* Chile. We have the largest apartment in the University for a school-room. The joiners are busy fitting it up, and we only wait their finishing to begin operations.

He also quotes the following letter from the government to Don Manuel Salas, one of the leading citizens, as showing the zeal with which the supreme dictator, O'Higgins, proposed to aid the plan for the education of the children of Chile:

Mr. Thomson, who has been engaged to establish in this city the new system of mutual instruction, has already arrived in Valparaiso. His Excellency, the director, has a decided wish that public education may be general and is very anxious to give all possible aid to this establishment for elementary instruction, as preparatory to the higher branches. He has, for this reason, appointed you with full powers to forward this object, in conjunction with Mr. Thomson and the president of the Board of Public Education. You will, therefore, do all in your power to establish it as soon and as perfectly as possible. A copy of this order is to be sent to the president of Public Instruction and to Mr. Thomson.

Three Lancasterian schools were established in Santiago—the principal of which was for the training of teachers who were

to be sent to other parts of the country—one in Valparaiso, and another in Coquimbo. Thomson's contract, however, called for but one year of service and he was anxious to go north where he hoped to continue his work. General José de San Martín was then at the height of his power and had invited Thomson to go to Lima for the purpose of establishing schools. Consequently, it was necessary to obtain another teacher, and this was done through the Chilean legation in London. The choice fell on Mr. Anthony Eaton, who, it appears, knew both French and Spanish, as well as English. Due to political changes, and, especially, to the fact that he soon fell ill, the stay of Eaton in Chile was brief and it was not long until the suspicions of the clergy were aroused against the whole Lancasterian movement. This opposition of the Church was the deathknell of the movement.

The decision rendered by one Guzmán, a friar, relative to a proposition made by Thomson to bring artisans and agriculturists to Chile is an interesting document. This proposition was referred to the ecclesiastical commission, in conformity with the law of that time, and the above mentioned friar, in the name of the commission made the following report:

A memorial presented by Mr. James Thomson, in which he proposes to the supreme government to bring to Chile excellent foreign artisans and farmers, is that which gives rise to the present discussion.

Since it is not incumbent on our commission to discuss the utility of said proposition, I will limit myself to an examination from the religious standpoint for the purpose of determining whether or not such a procedure would be consonant with the interests of the religion of the state, which is the chief concern of this commission.

It is a terrible thing for one who is a patriot by nature and a Christian by profession to give a decision in which the interests of the country and religion seem to be in conflict! And, who would not say, at first thought, that this offer ought to be accepted and that a thousand thanks ought to be given to the author for his kindness and philanthropy? To bring people to a country which is almost desert, and which is in need of population, of arms to cultivate its fertile fields, of skilled labor to utilize its raw materials, and of men who are fitted to

establish commerce, both foreign and domestic, is all that our young republic could desire and that is what the proposition seems to represent.

But, if we analyze it, in a religious sense, as is fitting in a Catholic state, as is ours, we find not a few difficulties to be overcome before we admit the proposition.

These foreigners, whom it is proposed to bring to our republic, may be Catholic Christians. In that case, there is not the slightest objection to receiving them and to allow as many to come, with their families, as the government wishes, and to establish themselves in the country.

But, they may be Protestants and of diverse religions and sects, as appears to be indicated in the proposition. It is equally true that they may be married or single, transient or permanent, and may bring with them their religion or worship and have their meetings and congregations to hold worship according to their own rites and liturgy. These are the great difficulties which are concealed or involved in the proposition and which must be cleared up and overcome before the plan can be considered.

As was to be expected, in view of this stand of the chief of the ecclesiastical commission, Thomson's plan was condemned as contrary to religious unity in the country and was rejected by the government. Continuing, the report states:

It would not be prudent to receive these devouring vipers (the foreigners who are not Roman Catholics) into the bosom of a state which desires to conserve pure, clean, and inviolable the religion which it professes. The coming to Chile of foreign families would ruin the Catholic religion.

One such who pretends to live here should content himself with the tolerance or civil permission which the government has granted to all foreigners to carry on business, free from molestation in regard to their morals and dogmas, provided they do not preach them nor otherwise interfere in religious matters; for, in such case, they should be expelled from the republic as disturbers of the peace, public order, and tranquillity.

Quite different was the attitude of Director General O'Higgins toward the establishing of the Lancasterian school system. His decree, which has a special historic interest, was as follows:

The Lancasterian system of mutual instruction, now introduced in most parts of the civilized world and to which many places already

owe an improvement in their habits, has been established among us and in such a manner as gives promise of beneficial results. The propagation of this system holds out the surest means of extirpating those principles formed among us in times of darkness. The government has resolved to protect this establishment zealously and, as the best way of fulfilling its intentions, has resolved to unite with it in this object those persons who have the same sentiments on the subject and who, at the same time, possess that activity, zeal, and energy which this important matter demands.

In all places this system of instruction prospers and extends itself under the fostering care of societies. This circumstance at once determines me to follow the example thus set before us and immediately to organize a society for this object. Of this society I will be the protector and a member. My first minister of state will be the president. The solicitor general of the city, the protector of the city schools, and the rector of the national institute will be members *ex officio* of the committee of management.

The object of this society shall be to extend throughout Chile the benefits of education, to promote the instruction of all classes but especially the poor, and to point out those means by which it may be best adapted to the circumstances and necessities of the country. . . .
(Signed) O'HIGGINS.

In one of the volumes of his monumental work, *La Historia de Chile*, which has served as the basis of all modern writers on the subject, the author, Claudio Gay, refers to the work of Thomson and the value of the Lancasterian schools as a means of moralizing the people. As to the schools, he declares that they were costly, in the extreme, and, besides, "gave no result whatever". In regard to Thomson, he mistakenly declares that it became necessary to dismiss him. The real facts, as indicating the high esteem in which Thomson was held, may be deduced from the following decree of Director General O'Higgins:

In view of the wellknown patriotism of James Thomson, a native of Scotland, and the unusual merit with which he has labored in Chile, as principal of the schools of mutual instruction according to the system of Lancaster which are established in this capital, of the normal schools and others, which have been opened by persons who have received his instruction—which instructions, divulged, as they are

being divulged, throughout the country, will open a wide field for the education of the youth and will end to the bettering of the customs of the inhabitants in general; and desirous of remunerating him in the way which is within the reach of the government: I have decided to declare him, and do hereby declare him, a citizen of Chile, and, consequently he is and must be considered as a Chilean, with rights equal to all natives of the country and of enjoying all favors and privileges which are due them.

Therefore, all inhabitants of the state of Chile will receive him and regard him as such. Let the courts take due notice, as also all others who may be concerned, in order that my decree may be properly obeyed. Given in the Palace at Santiago, Chile, May 31, 1822.

(Signed) BERNARDO O'HIGGINS.

The deathblow to the work of the system in Chile seems to have been given by the commission in charge of public instruction more than eleven years after Thomson had left the country. Proper teachers had not been secured and the results of the work of the monitors were not satisfactory in the opinion of the commission. Already, the school had been divided into two sections and only that in which free tuition was given remained under the rule of the mutual system of instruction. The pronouncement of the commission was as follows:

The commission of studies, in recent session, has had under consideration the faulty organization and scanty progress which are to be observed in the Free School, due to the method of mutual instruction adopted in it. The commission has seen the practical result of this system of education which, far from corresponding to our hopes, not only has retarded the students in their studies but has also proved to be defective.

This is the natural consequence of a method according to which the instruction of a child is given over to an older one whose knowledge is scarcely greater. He thus acquires defects which are not corrected and in reading, especially, his progress is hindered by the scant capacity of his monitor.

As a result, we find today with sorrow that there are but one or two in each class who know how to read correctly. In view of this, the commission has deemed it prudent to abolish the method of mutual instruction, limiting to sixty the number of students, which is the maximum that can come under the immediate inspection of the master.

This report was sent to the president of the Republic, the government at once adopted it, and the Lancasterian system was abolished from the "Instituto Nacional" of Chile and, as it was supposed, from the schools of the country. But it was to be heard from again, in connection with the so-called Sunday schools which were established, through the initiative of Don Andrés Bello, the great Venezuelan who gave to Spanish America the first complete treatises on Spanish grammar and, in Chile, was influential in the production of the civil code of laws.

Bello had been one of the chief opponents of the Lancasterian system in the public schools, yet, when, at his suggestion, the Sunday schools were established for the instruction of the soldiers of the Chilean army and other adults, the system employed was that of Lancaster. In 1840, four schools of this class were established in Santiago and the government gave orders to print a new edition of the texts that had been used in the former schools of mutual instruction. No attempt, however, had been made to provide suitable monitors or assistant teachers, and the failure of the system was once more assured. A new adversary had also come, who attacked the method of mutual instruction. This was no other than the great Sarmiento of Argentina, then in Chile, and the Sunday schools were suppressed in 1843.

The reasons for the failure, says Sarmiento, were easily found. They were, in brief, as follows:

1. The difficulty of teaching a man who does not want to learn, and who studies simply because ordered to do so by his superior officer.

2. The complexity and absurdity of the system called "mutual instruction," which was the one employed. This method was enough to tire out and discourage any man, however anxious he may have been to learn.

3. The incomplete application of the system, since there were not enough monitors well prepared for their work.

It is probable that in the last point we have the real explanation of the failure of the Sunday schools. Inasmuch as its whole genius lay in its having a large number of monitors, well prepared for their work, it could hardly be expected to prove a success if these elements were lacking.

In his work on Popular Education, Sarmiento makes a final reference to the work of the Lancasterian system in Chile. He says:

In Aconcagua I made a trial of this system, with the scarcity of material which I could get together. For the effects of the system the government of Chile had ordered published a number of texts—one for reading, another for arithmetic, and a third for writing and dictation. These establishments have now entirely disappeared, without leaving any trace of their influence, and with them has disappeared, also, any doubt we may have had in regard to their efficiency.

This paragraph, which may be considered the epitaph of the system in Chile, forms a part of the book of the great Argentine educator which was published in 1849, twenty-seven years after Thomson had left Chile for Perú and other northern countries.

Peru

In June, 1822, Thomson sailed from Valparaiso for Peru and, after ten days of navigation, reached Callao, the port of Lima. On the same day that he reached Lima, which was then held by the liberating army under General José de San Martín, he called on the commander in chief and received a warm welcome. San Martín expressed his great pleasure in welcoming him to Peru and pledged his support in furthering plans for the establishing of the Lancasterian schools throughout the country. On the following day, with true Hispanic American politeness and punctiliousness, San Martín returned the call and together they planned for the opening of the schools at an early date. The members of the constituted government gave every encouragement and one of the convents of the city was cleared of its occupants and given over to the uses of the first school to be organized. In this connection, Thomson naïvely remarks:

I believe that the number of convents will decrease as the schools multiply in number!

He also remarks on the unusual celerity with which the orders of the government were carried out in the matter of dis-occupying

the convent, and cites this as a proof of the entire submission of the ecclesiastical authorities to the civil power. He says:

This order for the friars to remove was given on Saturday. On Monday they began to remove, and on Tuesday the keys were delivered up.

He at once proceeded to draw up a plan for the inauguration of his work. This was presented to San Martín, who suggested certain changes, although he declared that, as a whole, the plan was "excellent". One phrase, in particular, met the approbation of the Chilean minister, who was aiding Thomson, as also that of San Martín. This phrase read:

The men who will be most useful to South America are men truly religious and of sound morality.

"That is very true", was the comment of San Martín.

In view of the facilities given him, and in the light of his experience, gained through years of travel in South America in association with its principal men, Thomson had a deep sense of responsibility for the evangelization of the continent. It was while still at the beginning of his work in Peru that he gave expression to his thoughts in words which have often been quoted and which, although uttered almost a century ago, are still true today. He exclaimed:

What an immeasurable field is South America! And how white it is to the harvest! I have told you this repeatedly, but I have pleasure in telling it to you again. I do not think that, since the world began, has there been so fine a field for the exercise of benevolence in all its parts. The man of science, the moralist, the Christian, have all fine scope here for their talents. God, who has opened such a door, will surely provide laborers!

The promises of San Martín were not empty words. He at once published a decree relative to the Lancasterian schools, of which the following is a translation:

Preamble: Without education there is not, properly speaking, such a thing as society. Men may indeed live together without it, but they

can not know the extent of the duties and the rights that bind them one to another, and it is in the right knowledge of these duties and rights that the wellbeing of society consists. The bringing of education to any degree of perfection is, from the very nature of things, a slow work. To accomplish it, time is required and some degree of stability in the government, as well as other circumstances, both natural and moral. All these must combine in order that the education of the people may become general and that a foundation may thus be laid for the continuance of those institutions which may be established among them.

Of the various improvements which the government has been desirous of making, none has been more earnestly and constantly kept in view since the moment of its assumption of power than the reformation of public education. In those intervals of public tranquillity which have been enjoyed, when the clamor of arms has ceased, this object has occupied the attention of the government, and, although the sun has not stood still, it has found in activity the secret of doubling the length of the day.

It has already been announced in various decrees of the government that the introduction of the Lancasterian system in the public schools was one of the plans under study. It is not yet possible to calculate the revolution which will be produced in the world by this system of mutual instruction when its use has become generalized throughout the civilized nations. When this shall take place, ignorance will come to an end, or, at least, shall be reduced to certain limits beyond which it shall never be allowed to pass.

The time is now arrived to set this system a-going in this country and the commencing of it is worthy of the month of July—a month in which posterity will record many events of importance—and we trust that the justice will be done us to declare that we have desired to make this time memorable by deeds which philosophy applauds and which spring from the noblest principles of all human society, namely, the love of glory, founded on the promotion of the prosperity and happiness of mankind.

The above are the reasons on which the following decree is based.

The Supreme Deputy, with the advice of the privy council, decrees:

1. There shall be established a central or principal school, according to the system of Lancaster, under the direction of Mr. Thomson.
2. The College of Santo Tomás shall be appropriated for this purpose. The friars at present residing in it shall remove to the large

convent of Santo Domingo, leaving only so many as may be necessary for the service of the church which is attached to it.

3. In this establishment the elementary parts of education shall be taught, together with the modern languages. The necessary teachers for this purpose shall be appointed agreeably to the arrangements which shall be pointed out in the plan for the National Institute of Peru.

4. At the expiration of six months all public schools shall be closed, which are not then being conducted according to the system of mutual instruction.

5. All the masters of the public schools shall attend the central schools with two of their most advanced pupils, in order to be instructed in the new system, and, in studying it, they shall attend to the method prescribed by the director of the establishment.

6. As soon as the director of the central school shall have instructed a sufficient number of teachers, these shall be employed, with competent salaries, in establishing public schools on the same principles in the capital city of each province.

7. At the first public examination which shall take place in the central school, those masters who have been most attentive in learning the system and shall have made such progress as to be able to conduct schools according to it, shall receive the award of a gold medal to be offered for that purpose by the minister of state.

8. For the preservation and extension of the system, the Patriotic Society of Lima is particularly requested and commissioned to take such measures as may be considered necessary for these purposes, and they are desired to make known to the government those things in which its cooperation may be required in order to carry forward effectually the important object.

9. In order that the advantages of this system may be extended to the female sex, which the Spanish government has always treated with culpable neglect, it is especially recommended to the Patriotic Society to take into consideration the most likely means for establishing a central school for the instruction of girls.

10. The salary of the director and other necessary expenses for this establishment shall be defrayed by the government. The minister of state is authorized to issue all the orders necessary for the punctual fulfillment of this decree.

Given in the Government Palace in Lima, July 6, 1822.

In his letters written from Lima at this time Thomson enters into considerable detail in his description of this stirring period of American history. He particularly defends San Martín against the imputation that he wished to make himself king or dictator of the conquered provinces, and declares his belief that the commander in chief stood only for a republican form of government. Other and better known—though, it is probable, less well prepared—historians have fully endorsed this belief of Thomson. A committee had drawn up the outlines of a political constitution for the country and congress was engaged in its discussion, article by article. The article on religion had excited great interest and Thomson's description of the scene in congress while it was under discussion merits reproduction as a whole. Referring to this historic discussion of the form of religion that should prevail in the newly constituted republic, he says:

The form of Government has been unanimously declared to be republican, agreeably to what I hinted to you in one of my late letters. In the "Outlines" the Article on Religion runs thus,—"*The religion of the State is the Catholic Apostolic Church of Rome.*"

One of the members wished to add the word *only* or *exclusive*, but, since the rest did not agree with him, he entered his protest. On this account, as well as for the general interest in the subject, the matter was keenly discussed. I went, as you may well suppose, to hear what should be said on both sides and to see the result.

The first who ascended the tribune to speak was a clergyman, carrying in his hand a book about the size of a New Testament. He began by stating that it was his sincere desire that all men might be of the Roman Catholic Church. He then stated that the only proper way, in his opinion, of bringing men into the Church, was not by force nor by persecution, in any shape, but solely by persuasion, by the force of reason. After speaking a few minutes to this effect, he went on to treat of the Article as stated in the "Outlines." He regretted the divisions among Christians and the distinctive names one body and another had taken.

He then opened the book which he held in his hand, which I now found to be one of the Bible Society's New Testaments in Spanish. He read the 12th and 13th verses of the first chapter of the first Epistle

to the Corinthians and proceeded to make some remarks on the passage and to apply it to the Article in question. It appeared to him, he said, very like the divisions censured by Paul to see the Article stated in the words *Roman, Catholic, Apostolic*. Having done this he proposed that the Article should be stated in this manner,—

"The Religion of Jesus Christ is the Religion of the State."

He then made some observations on the propriety of stating it in this way, in preference to the way it stands in the "Outlines," and thus concluded his speech.

As might have been expected, this alteration or amendment was opposed. . . . After being fully discussed the vote was taken,—First, whether the Article should stand as stated in the "Outlines," or be altered. It was carried that it should stand as stated. The next question was, if the word "exclusive" should be added, and it was, unfortunately, carried in the affirmative. The Article now reads thus,—

"The Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion is the Religion of the State and the exercise of every other is excluded."

A congress had been elected in Peru, as well as a president of the Republic and other national officers, and Thomson seems to have gained the respect and favor of all these men of influence.⁶

His plans now reached beyond the mere establishment of schools and the circulation of the Bible in Spanish.

⁶ San Martín had already gone north, where he held the now historic interview with Simón Bolívar. This was more than an interview between two individuals; it was a *pour parler* between two radically distinct theories of government. Although there is no authoritative account of what passed between these two sphinx-like men in their few hours of conversation in the little town under the equator, when they met for the first and only time, there is good reason to conclude that San Martín saw the futility of opposing the ambitions of his younger colleague. Dedicated to the proposition that each of the states of South America ought to be free and independent, a complete entity in itself, self-governing and with self-perpetuating institutions, he could not acquiesce in the plan of Bolívar to establish a Federation of States, something after the plan of the Delian League, in Greece, with Bolívar himself, as was evidently his ambition, as its permanent head. Consequently, this great-hearted patriot, the Washington of South America, turned his face again toward the south and, resigning all his posts in the army and in the government, went into voluntary exile, leaving Bolívar supreme in the newly established republics of the West coast. He returned to Buenos Aires and thence crossed to France. He died in Paris in 1850, and, thirty years afterward, his body was brought back by his grateful countrymen, who had now learned the debt due his memory, and now rests in the beautiful cathedral of Buenos Aires.

In a letter to the Bible Society, he says:

Your are aware, I suppose, that the inhabitants of Peru do not all speak the Spanish language. The descendants of the ancient Peruvians are very numerous and most of them speak only the language of their ancestors. In some parts of the country, they have assumed the manners and the language of their conquerors, but in other parts,—and these by far the most populous,—their ancient tongue is the only medium of communication.

I have long had my eye on this interesting part of the population of the country and have, at length, obtained a fair prospect of being able to plant schools among them and also to hand them the Word of God in their native tongue. An officer belonging to a native regiment, called the “Peruvian Legion,” and who thoroughly understands the Quechua, or Peruvian, language, has taken a great liking to our system and is extremely desirous of benefitting his countrymen by communicating instruction to them. He is at present attending our school for this purpose and I entertain a pleasing hope regarding the results of his operations.

It was a time, however, of great political unrest and the plans of Thomson were to miscarry in many important particulars. The Spaniards again secured possession of the city, driving out the republican armies, and, although Thomson gained the friendship of the Spanish commander, he could do little in his work while the city was under martial influence. Bolívar finally arrived from the north and the Spaniards were driven out and Lima definitely passed into the power of the liberators. In a letter written near the close of the year 1823 he describes his impressions of the new commander in chief as follows:

I mentioned to you in my last that Bolívar had arrived in the city. Some days after his arrival I was introduced to him and was very favorably received. He is, in appearance, a very modest unassuming man. . . . He appears very active and intelligent, but I could not read anything of an extraordinary nature in his countenance. He has not the eye of San Martín, whose glance would pierce you through in a moment. Bolívar’s weather-stained face tells you that he has not been idle. No man, I believe, has borne so much of the burden, or has toiled so much in the heat of the day, in the cause of the independence of South America, as Bolívar. His labors in his own country are

already crowned with success. Colombia may be considered free and independent. According to all accounts that reach us, the Congress of that country is going on with great steadfastness. The following, I believe, is a very pleasing trait in the character of Bolívar. When invited to come here, he replied that he would gladly come, without a moment's delay, but that he could not allow himself to obey his feelings in the matter, as an Article in the Constitution of Colombia prohibits the President from going out of the State without the leave of the Congress. From this circumstance, he said, and from a desire to give an example of subjection to laws, he could not come until he could obtain leave. He accordingly wrote to the Congress for permission and although, from the distance from the Capital, he was long in receiving an answer, and in the interval was strongly urged from this quarter, yet he remained in Guayaquil until the permission from the Congress arrived and then he immediately sailed for this place.

Thomson had succeeded in establishing a good work in Lima, in spite of the political difficulties of the times. The central school had two hundred and thirty students. Another school had been initiated and already had eighty children in attendance, and he was planning to open a school for girls. Three masters were also giving all their time to the study of the system with the purpose of introducing it into other cities of Peru. But, in view of the continued war and the unsettled conditions of the time, he decided to leave Peru and start for Colombia. In reviewing his work in the principal viceroyalty of Spanish America, it is remarkable that he had been able to enlist the sympathy and active help of not only San Martín and Bolívar, in his plans for the education of the children of Peru, but also of the general of the Spanish forces in control of the city and the very Catholic governor.

His reasons for leaving Peru are very freely and frankly set forth in one of his last letters from Lima. After referring to the progress made by the children, in spite of so many difficulties, he adds that he had already packed his goods, preparatory to leaving the country. He continues:

I had indeed resolved to sail for Guayaquil with the first ship, and was inquiring for a passage. My reasons for doing so were quite solid.

My salary, as you know, is paid by the government. Under present circumstances, the payment of the troops is the first thing attended to, and to procure sufficient funds for this purpose requires great exertions in the present exhausted condition of the place. To obtain this supply, all the ordinary sources of revenue are laid hold of and other heavy contributions are laid on the inhabitants to make up the deficiencies. This being the case, there was no prospect of my obtaining supplies, more especially as persons in the immediate employ of the Government and who have salaries assigned them could obtain nothing As you know, I have no supplies but what my own hands provide me with, and it became an imperative duty to remove when my usual resources were dried up.

However, he found that he could not leave his school at once. The parents of the children, all of them poor and already burdened with the contributions that were forced on all the inhabitants of the city for the support of the troops, and in spite of the high prices that prevailed and made their very existence difficult, came to him and begged him to remain, promising to pay a small fee for the education of their children. In view of their insistence, and because of his great devotion to the work, he postponed his going for three months.

Colombia

In his journey to the north, with the capital of Colombia as his destination, Thomson was importuned to stop in both Trujillo and Guayaquil and establish schools on the Lancasterian basis. But he felt that he could not interrupt his journey to the more important centers of Quito and Bogotá, and his interest was now largely centered in the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society. In fact, his school work may be said to have ended when he left Lima, except that he sought out the school authorities in all points which he visited and endeavored to encourage education in every way possible. But he himself was unable to give his time to the organization of new schools and resolutely set his face toward the northern coast of the continent, from which he hoped to embark for London in order that he might give an account of his work during a period of seven years in the principal countries of South America.

The journey from Callao to Guayaquil could then be made in comparative ease and comfort by any one of the numerous sailing vessels that were engaged in commerce along the coast. But, from Guayaquil to Quito and, thence, to Bogotá, the conditions were completely changed. The route now lay along the alligator-infested river, as far as Babahoyo, a distance of about forty miles. This was a journey of three days in a small canoe, and the crowded condition of the small boat, the heat, and the swarms of stinging insects combined to make it an experience that was far from pleasant. He also notes that in addition to the alligators, of which he counted as many as forty lying together on the sand, the shores of the river were frequented by cougars, jaguars, and, in particular, by serpents peculiar to the tropics.

From the small port that marked the end of the river journey, he proceeded on mule back along the Indian trails and under the shadow of giant Chimborazo until, after having safely passed through many dangers, of which he makes but scant mention, he reached the city of Quito, situated on the equator and at that time one of the principal cities of Colombia.

During this journey up the mountain slope from Guayaquil he had been hospitably entertained by the governors of the various provinces which he had crossed, and by other influential men of the communities visited, and, in many cases, he lodged with the friars in their convents and was greatly aided by them in the sale of the copies of the Scriptures which he carried with him. Writing from Quito, and in review of his long journey, he says:

I have been much pleased with my journey, in the prosperity I have had in the distribution of the sacred volume. I have observed a very general desire to possess this book, and I have had the pleasure of seeing great numbers flock together, not to receive it as a present, but to buy it.

Of upwards of fifteen hundred New Testaments which I had at the outset, not many remain. I had no Bibles, and was sorry for it, as, from its being generally asked for, I am sure that I could have sold many copies.

The condition of education in Quito at that time, as well as Thomson's plans for the establishing of his own work, can best be understood by the following quotation from one of his letters, written from that city in November, 1824:

Before I speak of the state and progress of education in Quito, I shall mention two circumstances which have occurred to me since I left Lima. I notice these because they are encouraging, as it respects the progress of education, and because they tend to prove what I have so often stated to you,—that there is a very general desire throughout this country for extending the benefits of education to all, and with all possible speed.

The circumstances referred to occurred in Trujillo and Guayaquil. In both these places I received proposals from the magistrates to remain among them, in order to establish schools on our plan, and to promote the objects of education in general. In both cases I had a struggle with my feelings, though not with my judgment, in declining the honor offered me. Though my duty bade me pursue my journey, yet, in consequence of these proposals, I can not help taking an additional interest in the progress of education in the places mentioned; and through the intercourse that took place upon this subject during my short stay in these towns I expect some good will result, of which I shall afterward inform you.

I come now to speak of the state and prospects of education in this city. The state of elementary education here is very low, but its prospects are more encouraging. Perhaps you are aware that the Colombian government is taking steps to extend education all over its share of South America. Some time ago a school on the Lancasterian plan was established in Bogotá, the Capital, by a friar who had been banished from his native country on account of his then so-called revolutionary principles, and who had learned the system during his exile. Upon his return to America he established this school which has now existed for two or three years. It is the wish of the Government to put a model school in the capital of each department, and from these schools to send out masters to all the towns and villages the department contains. For this purpose, the friar whom I have mentioned, has lately arrived here and is getting his school-room prepared. I have had several conversations with him, and have been much pleased in observing the lively interest he takes in the education of the youth, as well as in the general progress of knowledge throughout his native country. . . .

The next thing I have to notice is of some interest and respects female education. You are aware that the education of this sex is very much limited in South America. It is so in Quito, as might be expected. From the consideration that this is a large place and the chief city of a large and populous district of country, I was very desirous of doing something toward establishing a Female Seminary or school here. . . . I am lodged in the home of the Marquis de San José, where I am very kindly treated, and I wished the Marchioness to take the lead in the affair, as a matter of courtesy on my part, and principally because she is the person of most influence in the place. I stated to her the plan proposed and was happy to find that she entered heartily into it. . . . And such is the interest taken by the Government in these matters that I have no doubt of its complete success.

Thomson remained three weeks in Quito and was cordially entertained by influential persons, among them the principal and the professors of the leading school of the city. Before leaving Lima he had bought two copies of a book entitled "The Evidences of Christianity", written by the Bishop of London and translated into Spanish. One copy was sold to one of the leading men of the city, who not only read it with the greatest profit and interest, but passed it around among his friends who also studied it with great satisfaction. So great was the interest aroused in this subject that the ladies of the city took a subscription for the purpose of having an edition published in Quito. Thomson's remarks on the need of just this class of literature are interesting. He says:

I suppose that I need not tell you that a work on the evidences of Christianity is not a little wanted in many parts of this country, as there are many who are verging towards, or have already gone into, deism. On this account, as well as on others, it behooves the friends of Christianity to bestir themselves on behalf of South America. The present is a very interesting and a very critical period for this country. Much, very much, may be done at present, through prudent and zealous means, to instruct and confirm the wavering, and even, perhaps, bring back those who have apostatised from the faith. These measures were connected with means of instruction, as far as can be done. Regarding the true principles and practices of Christianity, as taught in the Holy Scriptures, a very plentiful harvest, through the blessing

of God, might be reaped. If it should please the Lord to spare me and to enable me to reach my native land, I trust that I shall find many ready to lend their aid towards such a sacred object.

From Quito to Bogotá the route to be followed by Thomson lay through tropical valleys and over high mountain ranges, a total distance of over eight hundred miles. A recent traveler who was "vagabonding down the Andes"⁷ reports that he took fifty-seven days for the trip from Bogotá to Quito, and that his pedometer marked eight hundred and forty-four miles as the distance walked. Thomson, with his usual disregard for the spectacular in the account of his travels, simply remarks in his first letter written from Bogotá that he had had a "long and by no means an agreeable journey. The distance from Quito to this place is considerable, the roads are very bad, and, in passing through one district there is considerable danger". On this journey, however, three schools were discovered which had been established on the Lancasterian plan. One of these was in the town Yahnará and the other two in Popayan. One of these last was for girls.

The establishing of these schools in the provincial districts of Colombia, says Thomson,

is the result of a general plan of education upon this system in connection with a central school established some time ago in Bogotá, the Capital. On arriving at that city, I visited this model school and hoped to meet there the Director of the establishment, to converse with him in regard to the number and efficiency of the various provincial schools. I was, however, disappointed in seeing him, as he was actually engaged on a tour through some of the provinces to promote the formation of schools. I can not, therefore, state how many schools were in operation, but I have good reason to think the existing number is calculated to encourage the friends of education, and that it goes on increasing.

I received from the Minister of the Interior a set of the lessons used in the schools. One regrets to find that the Scriptures are not there, nor any extracts from a volume so much calculated to benefit us, in youth and age, in time and eternity. With this important exception,

⁷ H. A. Franck.

the lessons are good and in every way superior to the trash formerly used in the schools of South America.

One part of the lessons is worthy of notice. The Constitution of the country is divided into portions and sections and is read in the schools. By this means the children get acquainted in early life with the real nature and circumstances of their native land, and thus become better citizens and more useful to each other. This plan is worthy of imitation in other quarters. It is to be hoped that ere long this judicious plan, which has been adopted for the purpose of imbuing the early mind with a knowledge of the statutes of the country will be adopted also with regard to the Statutes of God unfolded in the Holy Scriptures.

One further reference must be made to the work of Thomson as the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, namely, the formation of a Bible society in Bogotá with the title "The Colombian Bible Society". The president of the University of Chile, to whose book reference has been made, has the following paragraph in regard to this society and its founder:

In Bogotá Thomson had the unspeakable satisfaction of founding a "Colombian Bible Society," whose only aim was the publication and distribution of the Holy Scriptures, in Spanish.

There was some resistance on the part of the clergy, but, on the other hand, the society counted on the help of the Government, of distinguished members of the clergy, and of many highly respectable citizens.

The first meetings for the organization were held in the chapel of the University, in the building which had been the principal convent of the Dominicans. The gifts toward the society, in a short time, reached the sum of one thousand three hundred and eighty pesos.

The minister of foreign relations was named president of the society, and the minister of finance and the vice-president of the republic supported the plan of founding the society and generously supported it.

Ten of the twenty members of the executive committee of this society were clergymen of the Roman Catholic Church.

Mexico and the Antilles^s

From Colombia, in 1825, Thomson returned to England. But his heart was in the work which he had begun in Hispanic America and, in January, 1827, he accepted an appointment from the British and Foreign Bible Society to undertake the introduction of the Scriptures in Mexico. He reached that country at the end of April, of the same year, and proceeded at once to the capital, probably going up over the route that is now followed by the railway from Veracruz.

From this center different parts of the republic were visited and a large number of books were sold. In the mining regions, in particular, he met with an unusually warm welcome from the miners and their families, of which he has the following to record:

The rich and well populated mining districts through which I have passed were supplied, by means of this visit, with a treasure more precious than that which they were digging from the mines. And it was a pleasure to see the people recognize, at least once, the superiority of the treasure which I offered to that which they had taken from the ground. They showed their preference by giving me, at one time,—not to mention others,—some seventy pounds of the precious metal which they had taken out, in exchange for copies of the Sacred Volume which I put into their hands.

However, orders prohibiting the further sale of the Bible, caused Thomson to withdraw from Mexico, although he cherished hopes of returning later to that country. He had been well received by many of the leading citizens, some of them ecclesiastics, and he was defended in the papers by some of these men who regretted his departure from the country and the consequent cessation of his work. However, he considered that his time might be better occupied elsewhere and he returned to England to make his report on conditions as he had found them in the ancient land of Moctezuma.

^s For much of the material of this section the author is indebted to a recent book, *Diego Thomson, Apóstol de la Instrucción Pública, e Iniciador de la Obra Evangélica en la América Latina*, por Juan C. Varetto, Imprenta Evangélica, Buenos Aires, 1918.

He had maintained but an indirect connection with the work of education in Mexico, inasmuch as a former *chargé d' Affaires* of Mexico in London had learned the principles of the Lancasterian system and, on his return to his own country, had been active in securing the establishment of schools on that basis. In a report which this gentleman, Sr. Rocafuerte, made to the "British and Foreign School Society", and which was afterward published, occurs the following relative to the work of the Lancasterian system in Mexico:

In Mexico, the first Lancasterian school was opened on the twenty-second of August, 1822, and, by one of those strange occurrences in revolutions, the halls of the Inquisition, so inimical to this institution, were converted into a public school, into a nursery of free men, into a true temple of reason. Three hundred children are taught to read in this school according to the new system of education, a system that will lead to the moral perfection of the world, as the mariner's compass led to the geographical perfection of the globe. This first school was called "*La Escuela del Sol*" [i.e., "*The School of the Sun*"].

Some time afterward, the government granted to the Lancasterian Association of Mexico the large and beautiful convent of Bethlehem, and a second school was formed there. This establishment is divided into three parts. . . . The first part is calculated for six hundred and sixty children; they learn to read, write, and cipher; they are also instructed in the political and religious catechism, orthography, arithmetic, and Spanish grammar. The parents of the children who can pay give a dollar a month. The children of the poor pay nothing.

The second department will contain four hundred scholars, who pay two dollars a month, or nearly five pounds a year. It is a model or central school for forming teachers and good professors who are afterward to be sent into the different provinces in order to fulfill the desire of the government which is to place in every village throughout Mexico a Lancasterian school, a printing press, and a chapel.

The third department will contain three hundred scholars, and these pay three dollars a month, or seven pounds a year. The object intended in this department is to teach Latin, French, geography, and drawing, on the principles of the Lancasterian system.

In 1823 there were introduced into the Lancasterian schools of Mexico the lessons used in your schools of London, taken from the Bible, without note or comment. Some old priests opposed the intro-

duction of these, stating that it was prohibited to read extracts from the Bible without notes. The secretary of the Lancastrian Association . . . supported the opposite opinion and succeeded in establishing in the schools the use of these extracts. The consequence is that our children are acquiring a taste for the perusal of the Scriptures, and they are, hence, learning to be virtuous, charitable, tolerant and free. . . .

. . . . This vast plan of human improvement is the great object of your noble institution, an institution which truly deserves the gratitude of the world and the most cordial support of all who are influenced by the *love of their country and the principles of Christianity*.

Although the remaining years of the life of Thomson were given up to the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society rather than to that of education, it will be well to follow him in his travels until his work is finished. Having been obliged to leave Mexico, he offered his services to the society for work in the West Indies. He was gladly accepted and in carrying out his commission visited practically every island of the Lesser Antilles, as also the larger islands of the groups to the north. From Cuba he wrote the society in 1837, as follows:

I am writing you from the Island of Cuba, a place which has been long in my thoughts with mingled desire, hopes and fears,—the first and third of these sentiments prevailing over the other. But your work and mine is to offer and introduce the Sacred Scriptures in all places and to all men of all continents, and even to those in the far-off islands of the sea. This is the last island of the West Indies, both as regards its position and the visit of your Agent,—and it is also the last in many respects which I do not now care to mention. But, although last, it is not the least, since, in size, it is the largest of all the islands of the Antilles, and it is also the largest as regards the need of help from your Society. It is the twentieth island which I have visited on my trips through the archipelago . . . and in all these places the Word has free entrance and complete acceptance, except in Porto Rico.

Returning to England, Thomson made a trip to Canada, and was then appointed agent of the Bible Society in Spain and Portugal. He also visited France and even crossed over into Morocco. He died in London, in 1854.

In the report of the Bible Society for the same year are to be found the following words:

The Society can not receive the news of the death of its lamented friend, Dr. James Thomson, who, from 1823 to 1844 acted as one of its Agents abroad, without recording its acknowledgment of the faithful and valuable services given by him during that long period, in South America, the Antilles, in British America, in Mexico, and other places, and, lately, when, at the request of the Society, he took charge of a provisional mission to Spain.

The Society remembers with special appreciation the personal piety of Dr. Thomson, his freedom from sectarian spirit, his devotion to the work, his zeal and tact, and his untiring perseverance in carrying out the same. Also, it can not fail to record that since he ceased to have an official connection with the Society, he has been constantly solicitous for its welfare and ready to serve the countries which had been the scene of his former labors. And many will bear witness of the voluntary aid which he gave, so far as he was able, and always with the greatest satisfaction, to the various institutions and projects whose object was that of the evangelization of all the world,—an object always dear to his heart.

WEBSTER E. BROWNING.